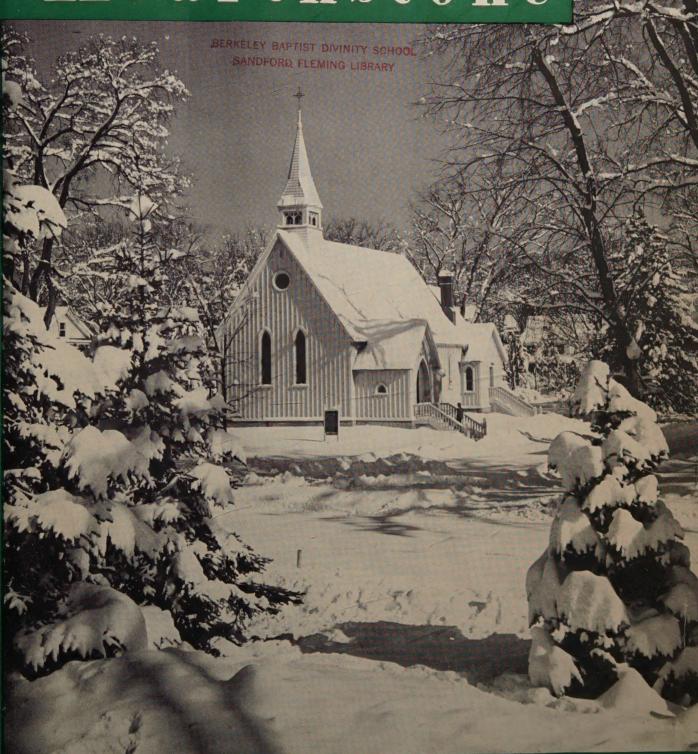
The Hagazine for the Christian Home Barthstone



- O Christian In-Laws-Jesse C. Burt. Jr.
- She Writes Pictures-Edith Tiller Osteyee

Magazine for the Christian Home **Hearthstone**

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Published Jointly Each Month By

COVER: photo by A. Devaney, Inc.

Christian Board of Publication

WILBUR H. CRAMBLET, President Beaumont and Pine Boulevard Box 179, St. Louis 3, Missouri Vol 8

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The American Baptist Publication

Society
LUTHER WESLEY SMITH, Executive
Secretary
1703 Chestnut St., Philadelphia 3, Pa.

No. 12

Second class mail privileges authorized at St. Louis, Mo.

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Printed in St. Louis, Mo., U. S. A.



Christmas Is in the Heart

When I was small, my mother read a story about a little Dutch girl fre a poor family. The little girl was to by her mother and father that they con not afford to get her any presents the Christmas, but the little girl laugh merrily and said that everyone receive something at Christmas time.

On Christmas morning the little g found in her wooden shoe, which s had set by the fireplace the night befo a baby bird with a broken wing. T bird had fallen down the chimney duri the night.

"See?" exclaimed the little girl ga to her parents. "I told you that would get something for Christmas. I take care of this little bird so that will get well."

This little girl had discovered the tr spirit of Christmas. For her it was I a time for receiving lavish gifts. was a time for helping those who we less fortunate than she was.

The spirit of Christmas should n prevail only on December 25. It show always be in your heart, enriching yo life all the days of the year.

What's Here? Santa has a bagf of Christmas treats for you to save If you're up a tree as to what to b for that hard-to-buy-for relative friend, perhaps Edith Cress's "Fort Cent Gifts for Friends Who Have Ever thing" is the answer to your proble "Making Christmas Creatively Chr tian," our study article and guide, geared to help you and your family ce brate Christmas so that it has the fu est possible meaning for you.

If you would like to make some your own Christmas decorations to year, turn to pages 16 and 17. Lou Price Bell tells you how to fashion expensive yet striking yuletide decor tions.

"The Trim-a-Tree Party," by Flo ence J. Johnson, is a celebration design especially for the kiddies.

"Archangel with a Grease Spot one of our adult stories, is about t trials and tribulations of an archang in a Christmas pageant. "Miracle Christmas'' is the tender story of a s dier who discovers that a shatter dream can be mended at Christmas tim

The space-ship crowd will like " Christmas Surprise for Eric," by Cla Spofford.

What's Coming? "Youth on the Te phone"; "American Amateur Artists "Doing It Together Is More Fun."

Merry Christmas,

S. W.

THE WORLD

Schools Adopt Spiritual Values Program

San Diego, Calif.—A program for teaching moral and spiritual values has been made a permanent part of the curriculum of the San Diego public schools by the Board of Education after being tried for several years on an experimental basis.

Daily Bible readings in classes will not be permitted, nor will students be required to read the Bible as a study assignment. The use of sacred writings, however, is permitted in relation to their influence upon literature. In addition, inspirational exercises featuring songs, poems, and recitations may be held at appropriate times.

The program is aimed at stressing the importance of religion, developing a program of moral and spiritual education based on the values shared by members of all religious faiths, and building respect for religious freedom.

The manuals, prepared for elementary and junior high school use, incorporate suggestions by representative Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish clergymen.

Among the ingredients listed are the existence of and reverence for God; respect for personality; loyalty to American ideals; responsibility for self-direction and strengthening of character; perseverance and pursuit of worthy goals; devotion to truth; respect for the Golden Rule; brotherhood; and sensitivity and creative ability.

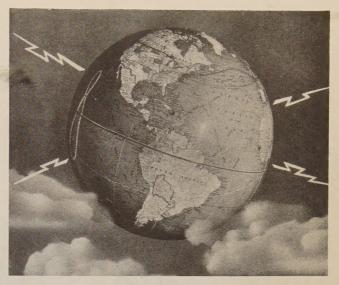
The program was initially devised over a two-year period by a school-community advisory committee before being tried out in the schools. It was conceived to replace a released-time program dropped from San Diego public schools in 1947.

• Religion Helps the Heart

Mexico City—One of the best ways to avoid heart disease is to lead a religious life, a Mexican specialist advised here. Dr. Teofilo Ortiz Ramirez said, "The heart patient—or the person who does not want ever to suffer from heart disease—should live day by day and hand in hand with God. There is no medicine like Christian confidence."

H. Armstrong Roberts





H. Armstrong Roberts

He holds diplomas from the National University of Mexico, the French Cardiological Society, the Argentine Cardiological Society, and similar groups in other countries.

"One of the predisposing reasons for a heart attack," the physician said, "is a state of emotional anxiety, which may proceed from an excess of ambition, vanity, or even emotional involvement. But the person who truly loves God accepts God's will, and eliminates from his life a striving after ways in which God or destiny may be circumvented."

Almost without exception, the heart patient who cannot be cured is one who is dissatisfied with his life and wants more and better and different rewards from it.

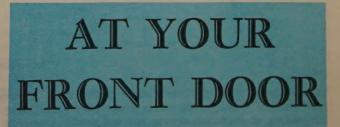
"There is no point in saying, 'Don't worry, and stop feeling anxious.' The heart patient must say, 'I am a child of God and interested only in doing his will.'"

Christian Homes Answer to Delinquency

Winona Lake, Ind.—Eighty per cent of the young people in the nation's reformatories and juvenile detention homes are there needlessly, Chaplain Howard Blandeau of Iowa State Training School for Boys, Eldora, Iowa, said here. "Few of the present inmates of such institutions would have gotten into trouble with the law if they had had a Christian home environment. The Christian home is the only means to effectively reduce delinquency in this country to the near vanishing point.

"In my work I have dealt with murderers as young as 14 and with youths hardly out of the grades who committed major crimes—kids so hard boiled they had no scruples at all about robbery, nor remorse about beating and maining their victims.

"But, out of 1,500 of these delinquents I have dealt with, not more than 15 came from thoroughly Christian homes where the parents were truly devoted to God and their families and were active in church." Most were "brought up in pagan surroundings and had no way to go but down."



Archangel with



illustration by John R. Steiger

Then suddenly, I felt the gentle magic of Christmas. A magic that comes every year with the singing of Christmas carols, the fragrant, spicy odor of pine trees, the reading of Christmas stories, and the giving of gifts to loved ones.

IT WAS ONE of those deals into which I was railroaded, more or less. On a sweltering hot day in August, when Santa Claus and holly wreaths were the farthest thoughts from my mind, I was asked if I would be the archangel in the church Christmas pageant. Either the heat had gone to my head, or I'm just naturally balmy (some people, I am confident, would readily testify to the latter). Anyway, I found myself accepting the honor (?) of being an archangel in the pageant. At first I was sure that I had been selected for this role because of my sterling qualities, but I was later informed that my long, golden tresses had been the decisive factor. I will never be able to understand why angels are supposed to have long blond hair. I know some shorthaired brunettes who I think look very angelic.

Then, I had no time to think about Christmas pageants, for I was in a dither with preparations for a late August wedding. The autumn months flew by, and I virtually forgot my midsummer madness-until I was abruptly reminded of it one day in late November, when Doris, the head of the pageant committee, told me that a week from Friday I was to be at the church promptly at 7:30 P.M. with a white costume of some kind.

"I don't have a white costume of any kind!" I wailed ominously.

"Then use a white sheet," Doris suggested.

"A white sheet!" I bellowed "If I'm wrapped in a white sheet and have my hair hanging down I'll look like something that should be haunting someone's attic."

Doris looked at me thoughtfully



"I'll try to get you a white choir robe," she offered generously.

"Gee, thanks!" I said, not quite sincerely.

The dreaded night of the pageant arrived.

"I'll drive you over to the church, honey," Paul, my husband, said graciously.

I put on my coat. "You're going to stay for the program, aren't you?" I asked.

Paul shut the magazine that he was reading. "Naw, I don't think so," he replied indifferently. "Things like that don't interest me particularly."

"But this is going to be my big moment," I intoned melodramatically. "You might never see me in a part like this again."

"I'll go if you really want me to."

I laughed. "I wouldn't ask you to do such a thing. With me in the show something is sure to go wrong, and I wouldn't want you to see me being disgracefully booted off the stage."

Doris and the rest of the cast were already at the church when I arrived.

"Thank goodness you're here!"
Doris said in a relieved tone. "I found a white choir robe for you."
She disappeared behind some scenery on the stage and emerged with the robe. I gasped when I saw it. Did she say that I was supposed to be dressed in white? This garment was anything but white. Judging from its musty odor and tombstone gray color, I presumed that it must have been resurrected from some ancient pharaoh's last resting place. Right on the front of the robe was a gargantuan grease spot.

"I know that this robe isn't in

very good condition," Doris apologized lamely. "But it won't look so bad to the audience from where you'll be standing. Besides, the lights on the stage will act as sort of a camouflage." I didn't have a chance to reply, for she hurried away to help some of the high school boys set up equipment on the stage.

I looked at the pristine garment and groaned inwardly. The program would certainly be a colossal farce if I wore that thing, and the grease spot stood out like the proverbial sore thumb.

"Oh, well!" I said to myself resignedly. "I can't back out now. After I've disgraced myself tonight, I'll probably have to change my church membership." I was secretly overjoyed that Paul had decided not to attend the program.

THE PAGEANT STARTED with a medley of Christmas carols.

"You're supposed to go on stage now," the prompter hissed.

I glanced at the program which she had in her hand. "No, I don't go on now," I hissed back. "I'm not supposed to go on until they start singing 'Joy to the World."

The prompter wrung her hands nervously. "Oh dear me, I'm sorry. I'm so nervous that I don't know what I'm doing."

I wasn't in much of a condition to be very comforting, but I tried to reassure her that no permanent damage had been done.

I ran a comb through my hair to remove a stubborn tangle. Even with the long hair that drab, gray robe adroitly concealed any angelic qualities which might have otherwise been revealed.

While I was standing there, inundated in my self-inflicted

misery, Doris walked over and told me to take off my shoes.

"Do I have to go on the stage barefooted?" I whispered in a strangled tone.

"Yes," Doris replied. "But don't worry. The audience won't be able to tell that you don't have any shoes on."

Somehow, her words failed to comfort me. Then I didn't have time to worry about grease spots and musty choir robes and bare feet, for suddenly the strains of "Joy to the World" filled the room.

"Your cue," the prompter whispered, giving me a shove.

I nodded wordlessly and disappeared onto the stage.

"And the Angel of the Lord descended from heaven," the narrator said loudly and clearly. That was my cue to climb onto a box to elevate myself from the earthly creatures on the stage. I climbed onto the box and silently gasped in horror as it emitted a loud creak.

"... and the Angel of the Lord descended from heaven ..."

CREAK, SQUEAK.

"Oh, this is positively dreadful!" I thought wretchedly. Probably everyone in the audience and certainly everyone on the stage had heard the creaking of my pedestal. What a humilating descension for the Angel of the Lord!

I stood stiff and straight, hardly daring to breathe. Once my eyes caught sight of the two high school girls who were standing on either side of me, dressed as angels in crisp, white, freshly laundered choir robes. They were heavenly creatures par excellence. But me? Oh, misery!

(Continued on page 28)

An Evening in a Japanes

It was raining very hard at five o'clock in the evening when Satosan arrived to take us to her home for dinner. It had been raining all day long, and we had wondered if she would let the weather spoil her party! She had to come for us because we did not know just where her home was, except that it was on the edge of the city.

In most Japanese towns and cities a whole district has the same address. For instance my house address is 69 Katahiracho, Now Katahiracho is the name of a street, but it covers a rather wide area, going around corners and in other mystifying ways, confusing the address seeker. Also, there are many "69's" in the area so that our next-door neighbor is 69 Katahiracho and so is the county court house which is down the street, around the corner, and half-way down the next block. Therefore, the best thing is for someone to come for you to show you the way to the place you are going.

It was raining so hard that we sent for a taxi. Our taxi could go only within two blocks of the house, as it was across a small footbridge and down a very muddy lane. Sato-san's brother and two sisters ran to meet us with Japanese umbrellas. When we arrived at the house, we suddenly found ourselves alone in the entrance where shoes always are removed before entering a Japanese home. There were slippers waiting for us. We put them on.

As my friend and I looked up from changing our shoes, we saw Mr. and Mrs. Sato and our student's older brother and younger sister waiting to greet us formally and officially. They were all down on their knees, bowing to the floor in greeting.

"We welcome you to this house,"

said Mr. Sato.

"This is my mother," said Sato Masako, our student, and her mother bowed several more times.

The family were kneeling on a high step, and we still were standing below in the entrance. We made deep, low bows of acknowledgment, then stepped up into the house and were taken into the foreign room. Here we were introduced, very informally, to the other members of the family, two younger brothers and another younger sister, so that now we were acquainted with all three boys and all three girls, as well as Mr. and Mrs. Sato.

Many Japanese homes, especially among the well-to-do and the educated, have a foreign room. This one contained several chairs, a sofa, a table, a golf trophy Mr. Sato had won in his younger days, a piano, a radio, and a phonograph -all very old and out-of-date but kept in good condition.

In an ordinary Japanese home the mother and her daughters fix all of the meal, and the guests are entertained by the male members of the family, especially the father. We more or less expected this here. but we were mistaken. All of the family excused themselves with the explanation that they must help. Before leaving us the older brother, Jiro, started a record and at intervals returned to change it; but that was all that we saw of

Phriotian Home

By Margaret Garner

the family before dinner was served.

Finally, after quite a long wait. as is usual in a Japanese house, we were called to eat. In most Japanese homes the guests eat with the man of the house, and perhaps the older children, while the mother and older girls are scarcely seen, as they must serve as well as cook. Because this was an outstanding Christian home, we did not expect this, especially since all of the family had been helping before dinner. So we were surprised and disappointed to see places set for only four people. We thought they were for the two of us, my student, and her father. Instead they were for Masako, Jiro, my friend, and me. The rest of the family were to eat in another room at the same time. We discovered two reasons for this arrangement! Both Masako and Jiro spoke English; so it would be a pleasanter meal for us not to have to speak or understand the Japanese of the younger children. Also, the table was large enough only for four persons.

The dining room was typically Japanese. The paper panels which made the walls were light colored, with a delicate design on the doors. All the walls of a Japanese room will slide and are removable, but usually only one panel is used for a door. At one end of the room was the tokonomo or a recess. We might call it a beauty center. Every Japanese house has one in its main room. In this corner there is always kept a lovely flower arrangement and a wall hanging which may be a painting of some

Japanese landscape, or flowers, or a Japanese scene. The honored guest always sits in front of this place. In a Buddhist home sometimes this *tokonomo* is the center for honoring dead ancestors.

Our eating table was in the middle of the room with pots of charcoal placed at each place for warmth. The table was only about a foot or more high. At each place instead of chairs there were zabuton, or large cushions, for us to kneel on while we ate.

We were invited to sit down, and then Jiro prayed. He had worked out his prayer carefully in advance so that he could pray in English. That was very thoughtful, since we do not speak good Japanese. He said simply, "God, we thank you for our foreign teachers and for our fellowship together. We thank you for the things they have taught my sister. We thank you for this food and ask your blessings on our evening. Amen."

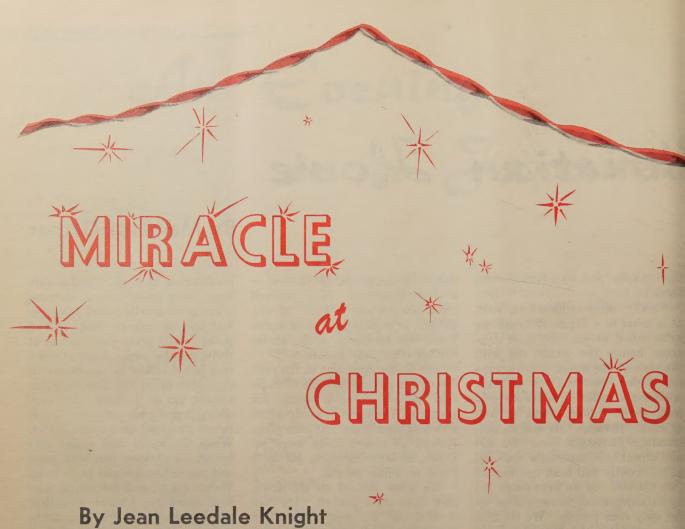
We could hear the rest of the family laughing and singing in the next room all during the meal. At intervals, the six-year-old sister would come in to ask if she could get anything for us. Once after Masako told her "no," the little girl whispered in her ear that she must ask for something so she could come back in to see us. So we asked for tea, and soon we were being brought more tea every five minutes!

Our meal consisted of what the Japanese call *sukiyaki*. Almost all foreigners like it. The ingredients are steak, sliced very thin, bamboo sprouts, onions, bean sprouts,

mushrooms, spinach, Chinese cabbage, long green onions, carrots, a Japanese noodle called konyaku, and tofu or soybean curd. All of these, or any given combination of them, may be used. A pot of charcoal is set either in the center of the table or at the elbow of the hostess, but on the floor. The raw, sliced ingredients are very artistically arranged on a huge platter. When the heavy iron skillet gets hot on the charcoal fire, some meat and vegetables are put in to cook. Water, sugar, and oshoyu, or soybean sauce are poured over this, and it simmers till it is thoroughly cooked. It is eaten with rice, a kind of pickled radish called takuwan, and sometimes a raw egg. The hot food is put into each bowl with chopsticks. Rice is in another small bowl in front of each person, and the two are eaten together. Sometimes a raw egg is broken into another bowl and beaten well with chopsticks. The hot meat and vegetables then are dipped in the beaten egg. This cooks a little and clings to the other food which is eaten with the rice and pickle. Of course, everything is eaten with chopsticks.

Our hosts explained Japanese table etiquette to us, and we told them about our table manners and compared differences. The tea kept coming, partly because of the little sister and partly because it always does in a Japanese home. At the end of the meal we ate several tangerines to take the rich taste of the food away, drank more tea, and then we and the entire family went back to the foreign

(Continued on page 30)



THE TOYTOWN EXPRESS elevator making its non-stop flight from the street floor to the fifth, spilled out a noisy crowd of excited youngsters into the toy department. Bill was pushed out with them, and propelled involuntarily down a jam-packed aisle which led, according to the gaily lettered signs, to Santa Claus's throne. And that, he told himself grimly, was the last place he wanted to go. The last time he had stood watching the old white-bearded chap talking jovially to the children who climbed one by one on his knee, Kathie had been at his side, her warm hand in his-

He turned and forced his way abruptly out of the line heading toward the dais and stood by the elevator door. His leg had begun aching again; he'd been on it too much today. Get back gradually

to driving, they had said at the hospital. So he had done the hundred and fifty miles from his parents' home to the city at one stretch. Don't walk too far for a start, they had warned him. O.K., O.K., so what if you have to park eight blocks from where you want "To find Kathie," he thought fiercely, "I'd walk a million miles on a game leg." But the pain forced him to rest a few minutes, and his weight shifted to the other leg.

He leaned against the wall and looked out over the heads of the shoppers. His first Christmas back home in how many-was it only four-years? It seemed like ten. Only four years, then, since he and Kathie used to meet here by the elevators and go for a quick lunch in the cafeteria each day of the Christmas season. All the dearness of her, the fun they had together, the way he loved her, flooded back, and he was waiting for her just as he used to. He was a mere boy, ready for graduation from law school, working in his Christmas vacation, with 'no thought of Korea beyond letters to some of the chaps he knew who were already there.

Kathie came hurrying as always, dark, pretty, smiling when she saw him at their usual spot. They dashed downstairs to find an empty booth, if possible, and hurried through sandwiches and Cokes so there would be time to walk around the store, crazily choosing fabulous make-believe gifts for everyone they knew. He got such a kick out of Kathie's delight in the gay glitter of it all, and he felt a great tenderness toward her, comparing his own boyhood



Christmases with Kathie's life in an orphanage. Some day, he always promised himself, I'll show her what real home life is.

But Kathie had a gaiety of her own that bubbled up and infected him too. Magnanimously, she provided each little girl at the home with a big doll and carriage, every little boy with a scooter or wagon, enjoying the game for all the world as though it were real. Bill avishly guided her around, picking out a fur coat, an evening gown, sparkling jewelry. "Oh, Bill, silly, those kind of things aren't for me!" she protested.

With a sweeping motion of his arm, he took in all the floor's glamour. "Nothing is too good for you, princess."

Kathie giggled. "I can just see ne helping around the kitchen Christmas morning in a strapless formal, dripping with rhinestones. Or scrubbing a bunch of grubby imps at bedtime in a mink stole," she said wryly. . .

Some days, they stood by the ropes at the far end of the toy floor where they both worked, watching the wide-eyed children gathering around Santa Claus. "Some day we'll have a dozen children and bring them all to see him at once, O.K., Bill?" She smiled up at him, and he squeezed her arm tight in return that day, unable to speak. For he had the orders in his pocket right then. . .

A Woman Jostled him with her parcels, and he shook the spell away. He began walking, limping just a little, up and down the aisles then, his eyes intent on the clerks busy with customers. But Kathie wasn't behind any of the coun-

ters. Let's face it, he thought acidly. Time doesn't stand still. Kathie had been due to leave the orphanage back in that same year; she might not even be in the city now, might be working away, anywhere. She might have. . . . But there, he made his thoughts stop.

Perhaps if he asked around a bit. . . . But no one remembered Kathie. Seasonal help in holiday time was transient, and four years is a long time. Possibly a floor manager could help. . . . Sorry, he'd only been in this department since summer. Try the Employment Office, sir.

Bill shook his head. They couldn't keep track of their parttime help, following them into other jobs or—or marriage. There, it was out! The dreaded, unvoiced fear he had carried half-way across the world with him was out. Why kid around? What was more logical than marriage for a girl like Kathie? A man to care for, home to look after, children to love. That was her kind of future. You couldn't expect a girl to go on waiting forever, even though her letters had said she would. Back then, he had wondered why her letters had so suddenly stopped. But now he understood why they had. Since coming home, the pieces of the story had fitted together and explained a lot of things.

All the time he was in prison camp, his parents had believed, mistakenly, that he was missing. Kathie would have learned that much from his folks. Then by time the reports got straightened out, his parents had moved away; so Kathie would have no way of learning that he was safe, and finally released and in a hospital. Nor could his family tell him anything of Kathie when he finally reached home. . . .

HE WANDERED up another aisle and found himself among the dolls that Kathie had loved showing to the little girls who lingered at the counter. A young mother stood near him, holding her little girl up for a better view, and a sudden fear hit Bill like a physical thud. What if—what if he should bump into Kathie like that, showing some child the toys? If she had married, then it was quite possible, too. . . .

He turned away quickly. What was the use of torturing himself like this? He would never find her here. Hadn't his mother tried to save him this hurt? A girl would be crazy to sit around all year moping and work at Christmas in the same old department waiting for a ghost to pop back suddenly, wouldn't she? All at once, the whole mission seemed stupid. He saw clearly now that he had been playing a game with himself. He could have gone straight to the orphanage, but subconsciously he had been afraid of finding out the truth too soon. So he had told himself he might find her by coming first to the store. How idiotic can you be? Talk about an ostrich with its head in the sand. It had nothing on him. Bill kicked impatiently at an empty candy package on the floor. Better go back home and try to forget.

But, like someone unable to stop probing at a sore, he kept shuffling forward with the crowd, on down the main aisle toward the red-suited old man on his gilt throne. Every step that drew him nearer to the roped-off section was torture yet like biting on an aching tooth, he had to keep on.

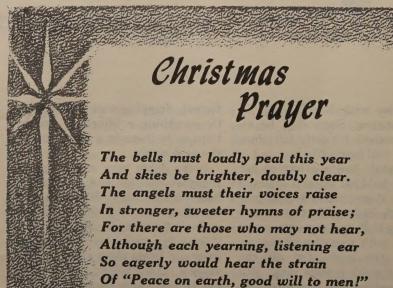
And Then, with a burst of light as blinding as that bomb-blast when he thought the world was ending, he saw her. Kathie. His Kathie. Standing there in person, not the vision that had walked beside him all afternoon, but real. Not ten feet away from him. And real.

He wanted to cry out, but couldn't. He wanted to rush to her, but his feet wouldn't move. And then, when feeling began to flow back, he saw her bend and push a tiny child forward. Bill closed his eyes tight. Just as he

had known, then; if, by some miracle, he did find her in the city, she would be married and have a child. Not his, though. Someone else's. Oh, Lord!

He forced himself to look at her again, and his heart almost stopped. For-tied by a rope to the child she had just pushed toward Santa Claus was a second tot, almost the same size. And the rope went on back to a third tot's waist, and then to a fourth, a little taller. Then it hit him like an atom blast! Of course, how stupid could he be! The children from the home. Why wouldn't she have still stayed on there? In her grief about losing Bill, she would naturally turn to the only home she knew, to the matron and the children whose needs would demand all her energy and love. Kathie! Oh, darling!

He shoved like mad to reach her, not caring how he pushed the crowd. And Santa Claus, sitting on his gilt throne, in his red velvet suit with white fur, looked down on the tender scene below him, and chuckled into his flowing white beard.



Ellen Earnhardt Morrison

Their world is dark, please shine for them,

Oh, Wondrous Star of Bethlehem!



The cost of the gift my friends like best to receive from me is about forty cents. It's produced in my kitchen amid the fragrance of sugar, cinnamon, and freshly baked yeast dough. Delicately browned foundations for Christmas breads, in the shapes of wreaths and trees, cool on wire racks. Near the racks is a glass bowl of satiny, thin white frosting. Around this bowl are small dishes of halved candied cherries, chopped walnuts, and silver dragees. The cooled coffee cakes will be covered with a coat of icing, and decorated with nuts, cherries, and silver candies.

Throughout the year I save convenient sizes of cardboard which may be cut from dress or suit boxes. A circle, larger than the coffee cake, is cut from the cardboard, covered with cellophane, and fastened with colorless cellophane tape. A small ribbon bow, a bright ornament, or a sprig of green, and the gift will be ready for Christmas delivery. Last holiday season the Christmas tree

cakes, set upon rectangles of covered cardboard, topped with pink cellophane, were most attractive.

The wrappings were not so fancy the year that we gave Santa Claus twenty packages of home-baked sweet rolls to distribute at the office Christmas party. For that occasion we placed half a dozen puffy cinnamon rolls on each doily-covered paper plate, covered it with waxed paper, and hoped that the holiday seals would hold the name tags.

On the Saturday morning before Easter, I sent out to the County Hospital hot cross buns for forty-eight Easter breakfast trays. None of the baking that I do during the year gives me more pleasure than the fashioning of these rolls that carry a reminder of the season's hope.

June is the month for orange rolls. One-by-four-inch strips are cut from the rolled-out foundation dough and easily tied into bow knot shapes. After they're baked, I touch them up with delicately flavored orange frosting, arrange

a generous amount of them on a large tray, and send them to the mother of my currently favorite bride, who has to provide breakfast for a houseful of relatives on the morning of the big day.

When a card seems inadequate to express concern for members of a good friend's household, quieted by a pervading sorrow, a pan of freshly baked homemade rolls, unobtrusively delivered to the back door, reminds the recipients that they are being remembered.

A good supply of fresh coffee cake helped me through a week as chaperon for some high school girls at the beach for spring vacation. Rain that kept the girls off the beach brought boys to our cottage. I could never be sure whether the boys came for the group singing that filled many hours, or for our generous servings of food. I know that as long as they kept coming, everybody was reasonably happy.

All of my gift rolls are made from this basic recipe:

(Continued on page 28)

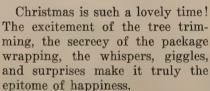


No After Christmas SLUMP

by Lovell Sherrod

-Photo by erb

It does sort of make you feel dejected to see those Christmas wrappings strewn all over the floor, doesn't it?



But after Christmas can be such a let down. We are so buoyed up with the excitement of the preholiday festivities that we don't realize we are weary until it is all over. Quite often we feel a terrific slump. We suddenly find that we are tired. The house instead of being delightfully confused becomes a mess. We are conscious of pine needles and artificial snow on the rug, and the litter of ribbons and wrappings. If we aren't careful, we'll spoil the real joy of the season with a very understandable urge to get Christmas over, to get rid of the rubbish, and to get back to normal.

Of course, we are tired after Christmas, but we should strive to make it delightful relaxation. Don't take the tree down too soon. Our children sometimes keep their toys under the tree for several days after Christmas. After enjoying them all day, they stack them under the tree the last thing before going to bed, then hurry

to get them the first thing in the morning.

Many of us who have children lament that we would love to see our friends during the holidays but we are so busy getting ready for Christmas that there is no time left for entertaining. Why not do this after Christmas? Then is the time for simple entertaining witl simple menus. If you are tired or rich holiday foods, remember you friends likely feel the same way So how about having a waffle sup per, or an oyster stew supper, o just plain, popular hamburgers Then, if the house is a bit rumpled with Christmas all over the place it will only add to the fun. Get ting ready for company will be s easy, because no one expects a spice and-span house at Christmas.

There was a time when taking down the tree was a dismal task I hated to do it for many reasons. First, it was a messy job, usually done when the family was away and perhaps I felt imposed upor Also I hated to end the Christma season, always such a happy time in our house.

I even found myself a bit morbid on occasions. As I carefull wrapped each fragile decoration I would wonder what the next



Christmas season would bring, and would even get a bit panicky, thinking "what if" this and "what if" that. Taking myself in hand, I decided this was ridiculous, and with my family we've worked out a happy "taking down the tree" party. We try to choose a time when as many as possible can help. We make it optional, so no one will get the idea that it is a distasteful affair; and we try to make it so attractive that no one will want to miss. I make a pot of coffee, and with cookies and milk on the coffee table, we start taking down the tree. Each person choses his particular job. Bill likes to put away the lights, as he is the mechanic in the family. He removes the burned out bulbs, replaces them, and carefully winds the cords so they will be ready for next year.

Tommy, the tall one, usually takes the star and the angel and decorations from the top of the tree, and we let the little ones take off as many of the lower decorations as they can reach. If some are broken, we don't mind. We want even the little children to feel that they have a part in this happy time. We sometimes have an album of records playing, and last year we watched the Tournament of Roses parade on TV.

Our friends, the Shannons, always wait until January 1, to take down their tree, and they have as much fun taking it down as they

had putting it up.

They first have a late breakfast before the fire in the den where the tree is. Then it is leisurely undecorated with fond reminiscences. Each one writes a little wish for the coming year to be put away with the trimmings, and not to be read until they are taken out next year. Mary Shannon tells me they have read the notes with hearty laughs, at times with tears, but always with joy.

After the tree is down, the question is, what shall be done with it? Neighbors of ours who own a wood burning fireplace have solved the problem for themselves and for the rest of us as well. The men and bigger boys cut off all the limbs and stack them on their kindling pile, and they do make a delightful fire. Then a part of the trunk is saved for the younger boys to use in a roller skate hockey game called shinny After tiring of this strenuous activity, onto the woodpile go all of the trunks.

Our town is one of many which celebrate the delightful Twelfth Night ceremony, or Epiphany, which means "manifestation" or "making known," in memory of the day the wise men brought gifts to the Infant Jesus. This. custom says, proclaims the ending of the Christmas season. On January sixth, in a designated spot, many trees are assembled, and a huge bonfire is made to the delight of old and young. It is well supervised by members of our fire department.

Then there are the Browns. When their tree is undecorated, the children tie pieces of bread and suet to its branches and place it in the yard so the birds can have a Christmas tree. Later, it is taken to the Twelfth Night celebration.

This year members of the park department gathered all the remaining trees and put them in our municipal lake to provide shelter for the fish. This was a real service, not only to individuals, but owners of Christmas tree lots found an easy way to dispose of leftover trees.

Consequently, we find fewer and fewer trees thrown into the streets, making an untidy appearance, buffeted by wind and rain, and looking depressingly little like the things of beauty they once were.

Mary Brown also tells me that one of the most enjoyable after-Christmas duties of their family is the disposal of Christmas cards. The children make a list to be saved until next year. Then they go with Mommy or Daddy to the Crippled Children's Hospital with their gift of cards to provide busy work for the little shut-ins. This not only helps the little patients, but instills a feeling of service that will likely stay with the children always.

With a little time and thoughtful planning, each Christmas season can be put away with happy memories and a good start on another wonderful year.





Mrs. McPherson started her unusual hobby when she was a girl. She would fashion speeches of great people into portraits of the authors.

-Photo from the author.

She

Lying under the willow tree, the boys lazily picked grass blades and whistled through them as they discussed hobbies. As I came up the walk, Will said, "My mother writes pictures."

"Go on!" Carl's voice was suspicious. "People draw pictures. People paint pictures. But no one writes them." Carl looked skeptically toward the green-and-white bungalow.

"My mother writes them," Will insisted stubbornly.

"I don't believe it." Carl spat out his grass.

I reached the door and was greeted cordially by Anna Talbott McPherson. We were hardly seated when the boys rushed into the living room.

"See!" cried Will triumphantly, pointing to the Holy Child over the fireplace. "That's one of the pictures my mother wrote. And here's another." He paused under the Madonna and Child. "And here are the pens and inks," he pointed to the desk in the corner.

Carl whistled. "Look at all the different colors of ink!"

"Now will you believe me!" Suddenly, Will sensed there were others in the room. "Excuse me, Mother," he said as he noted I was a stranger. "I was so busy proving to Carl that you write pictures that I didn't see you."

"I don't wonder they were so absorbed in your fascinating hobby that they didn't see us," I laughed. "I haven't had a chance to tell you before, but I am also here to find out more about your written pictures."

"Please, Mrs. Mac," pleaded Carl. "Won't you explain how you do it?"

"I echo that request," I added.

Mrs. McPherson smiled. "I write the scripture portions, appropriate to the subject, spacing and shading the letters so as to bring out the features." She picked up an unfinished picture. "Of course, in doing the colored pictures, the various tints help to cause the figures to stand out, as in pastel relief."

"It must take a lot of time," I mused as I took the picture from her.

"Yes," nodded Mrs. McPherson. "As writing sacred pictures is my hobby, I do not spend long periods at it. Besides, it is such close work that I tire after about two hours."

I glanced at the five photographs on the spinet piano. "If that is your family, I don't see how you get any time."

The boys began to fidget.

"Why don't you boys fix yourselves sandwiches?"
Mrs. McPherson suggested.

"Thanks, Mom," said Will.

"Thanks, Mrs. Mac," echoed Carl as they went into the kitchen.

"We have only William and Margaret at home now," went on Mrs. McPherson. "Joe David, who is married, Talbott, and Carolyn Faith are all in college. My evangelist husband has been traveling for the past nine years; so there are only three of us at home most of the time during the school year."

"Surely, you haven't done all these fifteen written pictures since the older children have grown up," I countered.

"No, indeed," Mrs. McPherson smiled. "In fact, I started this hobby when I was younger than William is. By the way, my sixth grader, Margaret, has

Vrites Pictures

already done some creditable oil paintings and is interested in learning how to write pictures."

"How did you ever develop such an unusual hobby?" I asked.

"I began as a teen-ager, using speeches of great people, writing them word by word, shading and spacing the letters into portraits of the authors. At first I used only black ink.

"It wasn't until I was in college that I thought of doing sacred pictures in this manner. One morning in chapel as I studied Hofmann's portrait of Christ hanging at the rear of the platform, it was as though Christ spoke and said, 'Why don't you portray me in my own_words?' At once I was thrilled as you might know."

I nodded.

She went on. "Before the day was over, I asked permission to take the portrait to my room. Soon my first written picture of Christ was completed."

"That must have been a joy," I said. "When were you married?"

"During my college years I met and fell in love with Chase McPherson, a ministerial student. We were married in 1930, and immediately afterward I left my home in Ohio to accompany him to a pastorate in Iowa. Later we served in both Virginia and Ohio."

The shouts of the boys outside drew our glances to the window.

"Go on," I said.

"During that period I mothered five children and underwent several serious illnesses. Before our marriage I had made four portraits of Christ by writing the Sermon on the Mount, Christ in Gethsemane, the boy Jesus, and the Good Shepherd. I had planned to make one of the infant Savior soon after our marriage, but sixteen years passed before I even started it. But I'm boring you.'' She smiled apologetically.

"On the contrary." I studied the Man of Sorrows. "This must have taken ages."

One of Mrs. McPherson's written pictures entitled "Madonna and Infant Saviour."





A portrait of Christ as a boy

Mrs. McPherson nodded. "I timed myself on it. Because it is a rather large picture written with extra small lettering, it took longer than most—forty hours." Lifting Christ in the Beatitudes from the wall, she said, "This one took about twenty hours. You see, the size of the lettering varies as does the size of the pictures."

I nodded. "Is it true that you are the only person known to be doing this type of art work?"

"As far as I know," replied Mrs. McPherson.
"And many think I am the only one ever to introduce this technique into the field of sacred art."

Picking up the other Madonna and Child written by this little lady, I said, "I first saw this picture in *Ideals Magazine* and have wanted to meet you ever since. Is this magazine your only avenue of distribution?"

"No," answered the artist. "The black-and-white pictures I had made before I was married were sold or given away in 1933 by an evangelistic party on their trip around the world. In 1938 my first colored written picture was introduced and distributed widely by the Radio Devotional League of Asbury College."

"It must cost a lot to get them printed."

"It does," she agreed. "I owe much to Evarett Mills, a children's evangelist in California, who has used my written pictures extensively in his meetings for the past sixteen years. He has financed most of the plates and the printing of the pictures. Otherwise, they could not have been given to the public, for I haven't had the finances to do it."

"What a satisfaction this unusual hobby must

give," I commented. "To think that these lovely pictures are now on the walls of thousands of homes in our land! I am sure they serve not only as sources of rare beauty, but also as a means of spiritual inspiration."

Mrs. McPherson's eyes lighted as she confided warmly, "To be perfectly honest, our five children are my greatest source of satisfaction and joy, although I am thankful, too, that my pictures can show forth the beauty of Christ."

"Thank you, Anna Talbott McPherson." I rose to leave. "After learning that Joe David is preparing for the mission field; that Talbott is studying for the ministry; and that Carolyn Faith is majoring in sacred music in college; after seeing William and hearing about Margaret, I don't wonder that you count your children as your most satisfactory achievement."

"Perhaps I shouldn't refer so much to my children," said this happy little woman. "I rejoice in them because of the possibilities of their future usefulness to the Kingdom of God. They are all Christians and want to be used of the Lord. Neither do I glory in any of my successes, realizing that it is not what we do, but what we are, that counts. I would much rather be known as a devout follower of the lowly Jesus than for anything my hands can do." She paused a moment as she looked out toward the farm lands in the distance. "But I must admit I love my hobby, since in it lies a hope that I may give to the world a new glimpse of our Savior whom I love best of all."

"She isn't Beauty, but she's nice," she said as she cuddled the doll tightly in her arms.



by Evelyn Witter

-Photo from author

As a Little Child

All the wonderful gifts I had planned for Christmas had to be canceled. The national farm income was at an eleven-year low, and being a farm family we were deeply affected by the drop in farm income.

I didn't mind substituting lesser items for the gifts for grown-ups on my Christmas list, for they understood our financial situation. But for Louise, our eight-year-old daughter to whom hog quotations meant nothing. . . .

She had wished for a certain doll we had seen months before in a store window. A most beautiful doll it was with "real" hair and a soft, natural-feeling skin.

She spoke of the doll often, and I heard her mention it in her whispered prayers. I wanted very, very much to buy that doll, but it was so expensive that buying it would take all our Christmas money; and wouldn't be able to

give anything to church or charity or to dearly beloved relatives.

To be fair about dividing our resources the total amount I had to spend on a doll for Louise was \$1.75. I bought the nicest and biggest doll I could for that small amount. It was a well-made rag doll...cuddly and neat and colorful.

As I drove home with it, I kept wondering: Would it give her any pleasure at all? Would she break into tears because "Beauty" (which we had come to call the doll in the store window) was not the one under the tree? Would the disappointment mar her Christmas joy? With all these misgivings I placed the doll under the tree.

Christmas morning I heard Louise's bedroom-slippered feet patting down the stairs. I hurried to the tree in the living room too. What I saw there was a lesson I'll never forget. Louise lifted the rag doll. She examined her carefully. A smile began to light my little girl's face.

"She isn't Beauty, but she's nice," she said as she cuddled the doll tightly in her arms. She looked up at me and asked: "You and Daddy got her for me, didn't you Mommy?"

"Yes, she was the best we could afford this year," I answered in a choked-up voice.

"Then she is the right dolly for me right now," Louise reasoned, serious for the moment. "And Mommy, I'll love her always!"

Louise's happy acceptance of the rag doll gave me real joy, and reminded me so strongly of how important it is to accept our lot in complete faith. "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

If we could always have the acceptance and faith as a little child, how happy we would be with what we have!



Here is a simple decoration. Different height candles stand on a rectangular piece of plastic foam, greens cut from the Christmas tree are arranged at the back, and three angelic musicians and a snowball are at the front. Effective on either a TV set or a table.

A wooden lattice was used as the basis of over-fireplace decoration. Clippings from gr were wired to up-ended lattice to form tree, two dime store bells, sprayed gilt and tied with ribbon, were added. Total cost—\$1.60







Another up-ended wooden lattice was attached to the inside of the door and cards added as they arrived to make a "Christmas Card Tree." Cards were attached with cellophane tape.

Callers to this home are greeted by a perky mouse, painted on wallboard and attached to the door by wire at top and bottom. Spray of green at top matches overalls. T-shirt is candy stripe in red and white.

When callers leave, they see the back of the mouse and the end of the Yuletide greeting.







WORSHIP in the family with children

Theme for December Glory to God

To Use with Younger Children

A Rible Verse

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!

-Luke 2:14.

One morning when the family woke up, the ground was white with snow.

Dan looked out of the window. All he could see were soft, fluffy flakes falling to the ground.

"What is it?" he asked in won-

"Snow." Mother answered.

What's Christmas?

"We'll go out and play in it after a while.'

When Dan and Mother went outside, Dan looked up to see where the snow was coming from. It felt wet and cold as it fell on his face.

"It's wet. It's cold," he said. Mother laughed. "It's wonderful," she said. "It tells us that Christmas soon will be here."

"What's Christmas?" Dan wanted to know.

"Christmas is the time we celebrate Jesus' birthday. It is a time for loving and giving. It is a wonderful time!"

Mother made some snow balls. Dan did, too. Then Mother began to sing. Dan liked to hear Mother sing.

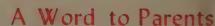
At first he just listened to the lovely sound of Mother's voice. He liked to hear it going up and down. Mother seemed to be happy when she sang. That made Dan happy,

At last Dan began to listen to the words Mother sang. The first ones he really heard were,

"All glory be to God. . ."

"What's 'All glory be to God?''' Dan asked.

"That is a Christmas song. It says that we are glad for Jesus' birthday," Mother said as she hugged Dan.



The materials on this page and on the next two pages are for your use in moments of worship with your children. If you have a family worship service daily in your home, some of the materials here may be used at that time. If you use The Secret Place, you may find that some of them fit into the meditations in that booklet.

-Bob Taylor



To Use with Older Children

Christmas Is for Everyone

Christmas is a happy time of the year. People are more thoughtful at Christmas time than at any other time. They are more unselfish; they are more filled with loving thoughts and more inclined to do loving deeds.

The happy spirit of loving and giving seems to be everywhere. It may be felt in homes as joyous plans are begun for others and as loving secrets are made and kept. It is evident in the colorful decorations that make homes more beautiful. It is shown as greetings and cards are sent to friends who are not heard from or communicated with at any other time of year

The Christmas spirit flows out of homes into the streets of towns and villages. Festoons of Christmas greens enliven drab streets: nativity scenes turn the thoughts of all who pass by to the Babe whose birthday is being celebrated.

People all around the world keep Christmas. Each nation keeps it in its own way, but everywhere the Christian gospel has gone Christmas is a holy day.

Christmas comes from everywhere, too. The songs we sing first were sung in France, England,

Italy, Germany, and many other countries. The customs we enjoy came to us from many lands and many people.

Christmas has been the reason for the writing of many stories which children and adults love. Writers still are writing Christmas stories, and they will continue to do so as long as Christmas lasts.

Christmas has inspired many an artist to try to tell the story with his brush. Almost every land may be represented in pictures of the Mother and Child. The one on this page is by Luke Ch'en. He is one of China's finest artists, and has painted many pictures of the life of Christ.

Christmas is for everyone. The baby as members of their own race. Notice the picture on this page. So do the angels. That is true of artists today just as it always has

This is true to the Christmas spirit. The angels who announced Jesus' birth said, "I bring you good news which will come to all the people."

artists who paint the Christmas story show the mother and the The mother and child look Chinese. been true of artists in the past.

We Sing Thy Praise, God

(A Christmas Litany)

For the anthems sweet and clear Giving peace, allaying fear,

We sing Thy praise, O God. For the shepherds watching sheep, For an Infant sound asleep,

We sing Thy praise, O God. For the star that beamed its glow So the waiting world might know,

We sing Thy praise, O God. For a mother's warm caress, For a night of blessedness,

We sing Thy praise, O God. For the Wise Men, joyous, swift, Bearing each a special gift, We sing Thy praise, O God.

-Florence Pedigo Jansson

copy by Frank M. White



For Family Worship

If you are not in the habit of arranging a worship center, it would add to the effectiveness of worship if you would do so at this season of the year. It may be a simple arrangement on a table, a mantel, or a wide window ledge. It may consist of the open Bible, a nativity picture, some Christmas greens, or whatever you wish. Above all, make it a place of beauty. If possible use a cloth of lovely color and texture. If you use a picture, the color of the cloth may harmonize or contrast with the dominating color in the picture. You may use a crèche in your worship center. If so, you may wish to use with it only the open Bible.

Experiment with different arrangements. Try several kinds of objects until you find the ones that are just right for use with your family.

Call to Worship:

"Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." —Luke 2:10-11.

Song: Use the song on this page or any favorite Christmas carol.

Scripture: Read Luke 2:1-20 if your family does not include children too young to sit through the reading of such a long passage. If it does, read Luke 2:14.

Conversation: About the crèche, or any other objects on the worship center. For example, a star may be talked about as you recall the star that led the wise men; Matthew 2:1-2 may be read in this connection.

Song: Sing another favorite Christmas carol.

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for this happy Christmastime. We are glad for your best gift to us—the gift of Jesus. Help us to keep the spirit of Christmas throughout the coming year. Amen.

Discussion: Discuss what it is that that makes Christmas such a

happy time for everyone. If your family can discuss better with a list before them, make your own. It may look like the one on this page.

Poem: Close with one of the poems printed on these pages, or use a favorite Chrismas poem of your own.

What Makes Christmas Happy

Music and singing
Loving and giving
Planning and working
Thinking of and greeting friends
Beauty and decorations
Trees, lights, candles, and bells
The Christmas story
The Christmas Baby

Long, Long Ago

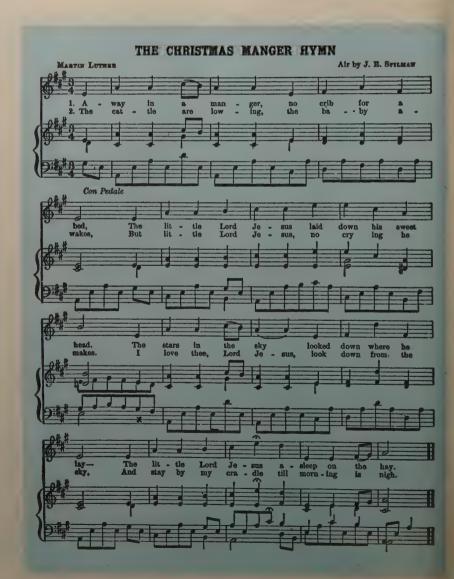
Winds through the olive trees
Softly did blow,
Round little Bethlehem
Long, long ago.

Sheep on the hillside lay Whiter than snow; Shepherds were watching them, Long, long ago.

Then from the happy sky,
Angels bent low,
Singing their songs of joy
Long, long ago.

For in a manger bed, Cradled we know, Christ came to Bethlehem Long, long ago.

---Anonymous.





"God Jul, God Jul! (Merry Christmas, Merry Christmas!)" sturdy Eric, who was twelve, called to the birds that fluttered about a sheaf of grain. He had just helped his father fasten it to the top of a spruce pole out in the snowy yard.

Blue-eyed Eric enjoyed going with his father into the still, deep woods. They had picked out their Christmas tree and the Jul-log that was to be burned on Christmas Eve, but the old Norwegian custom that he liked best was that of hanging out food for the birds.

As he watched the hungry little fellows feeding on the golden grain, he remembered the proverb his mother had taught him: "The Christ child came on earth to bless the birds, as well as man."

Eric loved the birds. He often tried to whistle their happy songs to Herr Larsen, who imitated them on his violin. Herr Larsen was the retired schoolmaster who lived down the hill.

Sometimes when Eric brought Herr Larsen fresh butter or the cheese his mother had made, the old man would light the candles, take his treasured violin from its worn case, and play.

Once after the master had finished playing and had laid his violin carefully back in its case, a dreamy minded him.

"No matter, I will teach you on my instrument," the master had offered.

So, during the past few months, Eric had had his lesson every week. He had finally learned to play, "Silent Night" as a surprise for the Yuletide celebrations.

Now Eric's pretty mother called out in the yard to him from the kitchen doorway. "I need more brown sugar to finish my Christmas baking. You may leave Herr Larsen some of these cakes and cookies that are already baked, on your way to the grocery."

Eric ran up the stairs into the cheery kitchen. The warm air was spicy from the Kringler and Kaker Mother had just made, and he knew Herr Larsen would enjoy these goodies.

As the boy skied down the snowy hillside to Herr Larsen's cabin, he thought how pleased his old friend would be with the music cabinet he had worked long and carefully to make for him.

"I'll bring it down to him on my sled on Christmas Day," Eric told himself.

"Thanks, a thousand thanks," Herr Larsen said when he saw the Christmas cakes. "You are always so kind to me, Eric." He stirred up the small fire in the fireplace. "How I wish I could give you a fine Christmas gift—Perhaps someday

By the time Eric was off again to the village, it was growing dark, for winter days are short in Norway. When he had nearly finished the long climb home, Eric stopped a moment to rest. He looked down

(Continued on page 28)

MAKING CHRISTMAS

By Olive Walker Hanson

Let your children take part in Christmas preparations, such as decorating the tree, helping to make cookies and candy, and wrapping gifts.

-George A. Hammond



At this season of the year families everywhere are preoccupied with plans and preparations for Christmas. Lists of gifts for relatives and friends have been made, and members of the family are diligently seeking articles which will make suitable gift exchanges. Considerable time, expense, and thought will be devoted in these succeeding weeks to the mechanics of "getting ready for Christmas." But little of the real joy and meaning of this significant celebration will find its way into the hearts of those who think of it merely as an annual occasion for the routine sharing of gifts and the sending of "holiday greetings."

Christmas is most meaningful to those who not only celebrate it as the occasion of Jesus' birth, but who make it an opportunity for creative family activity. Indeed, no observance in the entire church year is more truly a family-centered experience than is Christmas. To those who believe in the saviorhood of Jesus Christ, it is without a parallel in focusing attention upon the importance of families working, playing, and worshiping together to make the home a center of love and dedication to God. Thus, Christmas should be a time when families plan and prepare together.

Christmas has deeper significance for a family when home decorations and gifts are planned, arranged, and made through the co-operative effort of each one in the family circle. Although some members may not be so creative as others, or may have limitations because of age, some way should be found to secure their participation in making preparations for Christmas.

Creative projects in the home at Christmas require considerably more time, patience, and energy than the formal purchase of decorations and gifts at a nearby department store. Such projects are much more fun, however, and add immeasurably to the joyous anticipation of Christmas day. It is important, therefore, that parents carefully select and suggest types of decorative projects and gifts which will not only be meaningful to every member of the family, but will fall within the ability of each one to help create. No member, however young or old, should be excluded from having some part in Christmas preparations. Whatever activities are undertaken

REATIVELY CHRISTIAN

Study Article and Guide for Parents' Groups

should be representative of the co-operative effort of children and parents.

Home Decorations

Obviously, decorations in the home have timely significance during the Christmas season. These decorations can be made, purchased, and arranged by young and old together. Window designs of crepe paper pasted to the glass appeal to children and can be made by them. Such designs are easily removed after Christmas. Attractive decorations can also be made for the tree from construction paper, sheets of tin or lead foil, beads, and colored popcorn, thus adding a personal touch to the tinsel and brightly colored ornaments.

Parents increase the festive spirit of Christmas by permitting children to help select the tree, and by helping to decorate it on Christmas eve. Truly, no experience conveys a greater thrill and enjoyment, apart from the sharing and opening of gifts on Christmas day.

Outdoor projects for the home may include a door wreath constructed of woven holly, fir tree branches, and bright ornaments. Lights around the doorway and on the shrubbery add a cheerful touch to the out-of-doors.

A Christmas worship center can also be arranged by children and parents, thereby adding Christian significance to the occasion. This serves as a reminder of the centrality of God's word in the life of the family and the coming of his Son into the world. The family may use this center as the focal point of family worship throughout the Christmas season, especially on Christmas eve and Christmas day, with a lovely candlelighting service like "Christmas Joy: a Service for Your Home" (obtainable from the American Baptist Department of Adult Work, 1703 Chestnut St., Philadelphia 3, Pa., 5 cents each).

A Christmas card tree makes another lovely decoration for the display of greeting cards. As these cards arrive, the children may attach them to a small "pre-Christmas" tree with gaily colored ribbon.

Christmas Baking

Children love to help with the baking, especially

when Christmas cookies are involved; and fathers like to be available to "lick the spoon." Thus, the kitchen becomes a natural place for the family to gather as cookies are prepared and packed in attractive containers as gifts for friends and relatives.

Decisions regarding types of cookies for home and gift use should be shared equally by members of the family. Although Mother may supervise the actual baking process, everyone else in the family can assist in packing and wrapping these gift cookies. Homemade cookies make an excellent gift for families in which "mother doesn't bake," or for friends who are "hard to buy for."

Small and colorful cookies are especially appealing at Christmas. Children enjoy helping to decorate these cookies, representing the Christmas tree, holly wreath, Santa, and the perennial gingerbread man.

Families with a deep freeze have the advantage of making their Christmas cookies as early as November, and freezing them in containers. They can then be removed, thawed, and packed in separate gift tins a few days before Christmas.

Gift Projects

Members of families often possess craft and hobby skills that can be put to timely use at Christmas. Instead of purchasing gifts in the usual manner, families may take a more creative approach by handmaking all presents for relatives and friends. This, of course, requires early planning, the purchase of basic supplies, and advance instruction for each member who is to participate in the projects. Although this procedure requires considerably more time and patience, working and planning together creates a strong bond of co-operation and understanding between parents and children.

Decisions concerning types of articles which are to be made as gifts should be reached in consultation with children. Such decisions are important to children, and add immeasurably to their happy anticipation of Christmas day. Unfortunately, many parents take all the initiative in choosing and purchasing gifts without realizing that they are denying their offspring one of the greatest thrills of preparing for Christmas.

23

Every article which is made should be representative of at least one small contribution by each member of the family. This contribution may involve nothing more than wrapping and packaging the completed gift, but it helps to add a "personal touch."

Many types of gifts can be made in the home from wood, wax, leather, clay, metal, wood fiber, raffia, and plastics. When carefully and neatly prepared, these gifts have greater value than comparable ones which are "mass produced." In larger cities it is possible to find eraft and hobby shops where either raw materials can be purchased or where craft kits are available. Those who attempt to start from the raw material stage will, of course, need more skill and knowledge than those who use pre-cut kit supplies. In either case the completed gift contains much more personal significance than articles purchased at a shop. Children especially enjoy assembling airplane models, automobiles, and train coaches which are sold in hobby kits.

Gifts from wood include airplane models, necktie racks, bird houses, animal carvings, show boxes, wall plaques, toys, lawn figures, and address boards. Most fathers have the basic tools that are needed to produce these items for gift distribution.

Attractive wax candles are easily made and contribute much to the festive atmosphere of a home. Gifts of this type are generally appreciated by young and old alike. Many variations of color and of decorative finish can be produced with only a minimum of creative effort.

Leather articles make excellent Christmas gifts, including wallets, purses, handbags, belts, jackets, moccasins, hats, gloves, and key cases. The tooling of designs on these articles requires a little additional work, but materially enhances their beauty and appeal.

Gifts from clay have a timely popularity due to a growing interest in ceramics and pottery. The preparation of clay articles requires a special kiln which

For "MAKING CHRISTMAS" CREATIVELY CHRISTIAN" Study Christian

1. Preparation for the Meeting

Inasmuch as your meeting will be held in late November or early December, it should not be too late for families to use some of the ideas suggested in this discussion article.

Plan to make this a demonstration meeting. Invite one or two persons to demonstrate how a family might decorate its home in preparation for Christmas; and how gifts can be made from wood, wax, leather, clay, metal, wood fiber, raffia, and plastics.

Also plan to use some of the time for small buzz groups (six persons each to discuss the following question [10 minutes]):

"What value is there in permitting children to help select the tree, decorate the home, decide upon gifts that are to be given, and assist in making these gifts?"

Secure copies of "Christmas Joy: A Service for Your Home" and close the session with this candlelighting family worship service. (5 cents each from the American Baptist Department of Adult Work.)

2. To the Leader

Open this meeting with a prayer, followed by a reading of the Christmas Story (Luke 2:1-19).

Give a ten-minute review of the suggestions made in this study article.

Indicate what the author has said about the part that children should play in selecting and decorating the tree, in choosing gifts, and in helping to make these gifts.

Describe the various types of handcraft that might be undertaken by a family.

Point out some worship possibilities for a family at Christmas.

Have the group discuss (in small buzz groups) the question, "What value is there in permitting children to help select the tree, decorate the home, decide upon gifts, and make these gifts?"

(Allow time at the end of ten minutes for each group to report its conclusions,)

If you have succeeded in securing someone to demonstrate home decorating and gift preparation, allow thirty minutes for this session.

If you have not succeeded in scheduling a demonstration session, have the group discuss the following:

What home and gift projects do you think are best suited to families with (a) very young children, (b) elementary school children, (c) pre-school and elementary school children, (d) adolescents, (e) adults only.

Conclude the meeting with a candlelighting Christmas family worship service like "Christmas Joy: A Service for Your Home."

3. Helpful Resources

"Christmas in the Home," Glenn McRae, 50 cents. (Readings, stories, carols, and scripture selections.)

"The Family Celebrates Christmas,"
Dorothy Carl. 50 cents. (Ideas
for worship, gift exchanges, and
stories.)

"Make Your Own Merry Christmas,"
Wertsner. \$2.00 (Creative ideas
for home decorations.)

"Home Play," National Recreation Association, 75 cents.

"Christmas with Children," 25 cents.
"Christmas with Nursery Children," 25 cents.

"Christmas with Kindergarten Children," 25 cents.

"Christmas with Primary Children," 25 cents.

"Christmas with Juniors," 25 cents.

is not generally available. Families can, however, make beautiful gifts of pins, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, figurines, and vases. Children enjoy working with clay and quickly learn how to use this medium.

Metalcraft projects require inexpensive tools, and are not difficult to complete. Printed instructions provide all of the guidance that is usually needed to produce beautiful and useful gifts. Metal gifts can be made from aluminum, copper, silver, chromium, gold, and tin, consisting of trays, bracelets, belts, plaques, and pin sets. Careful work in designing and decorating these articles contributes much to their attractiveness. Young children are able to help with the simple elementary steps in metalcraft, while older children are often qualified to work side by side with parents in the more complicated stages of such projects.

Plastics make beautiful gifts but require special skills and tools. Whenever families possess such skills and equipment, they are in a position to make

gifts that are unique and different. With few exceptions, plastic crafts are primarily designed for older youth and adults in the family.

Family-Centered Activities

Christmas is a time of the year when Christian family unity and co-operation should be practiced and demonstrated. The very spirit of Christmas accentuates the oneness which should identify every family in Christ. For this reason parents are in a unique position to make this occasion a significant time when the entire family works and worships together in the spirit of Jesus Christ.

Family projects in preparation for Christmas help to unify the family, and enable it to express its Christian love and concern for others. Truly, Christmas becomes creatively Christian when parents and children demonstrate the spirit of Jesus in all their family relationships and seek to make peace and good will a reality both at home and in the world.

BIBLEGRAM

by Hilda E. Allen

Guess the words defined below and write them over their numbered dashes. Then transfer each letter to the correspondingly numbered square in the pattern. The colored squares indicate word endings.

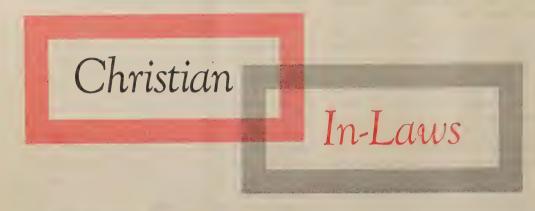
Reading from left to right, you will find that the filled pattern will contain a selected quotation from the Bible.

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B Narrow lane between buildings C Cat call	A Round trip by water						
C Cat call 56 15 121 109 61	B Narrow lane between buildings	46 18	60	9	92	128	
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D Where God's throne is	C Cat call	7 30	36	82	50		
E An air, or a tune	D Where God's throne is						
3 58 11 62 115 30 G Bird that wants a cracker 66 14 101 43 134 H Sinful 12 124 1 57 47 22 I Scowled 131 19 70 40 37 4 33 K Not broken or cut up 123 89 44 140 24 93 K Not broken or cut up 19 108 49 104 64 L Where the main entrance usually is 19 108 49 104 64 N Be aware of, or have knowledge of 10 A lot of money 10	To Am air on a tuna	13 25	72	29	34	21	
G Bird that wants a cracker	E An air, or a tune	3 58	11	62	$\overline{115}$	30	
G Bird that wants a cracker	F Customary	126 53	119	110	31		
H Sinful	G Bird that wants a cracker						
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J A written or printed number	H Sinful	12 12	4 1	57	47	22	
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Q III-natured, or sullen						
R Week-day paper	142	65	81	122	69	
ii week-day paper	38	113	45	96	105	
S Clothes presser						
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T Posted, as a letter	59	23	106	75	52	126
U Lion talk					0.4	120
	127	102	77	111		
V A crown	74	41	-00	100	07	01
W Large garden fruit, pink inside	11					91
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X Special ability or eleverness in						
some one thing	95	98	10	85	$\frac{-}{114}$	55
Y Highly seasoned						
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Z Cow language	84	117	132	129		
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(Solution on page 28)

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"In popular culture, the mother-in-law often receives satirical treatment. One often wonders if many couples do not consequently enter upon marriage fully expecting to have trouble from their mothers-in-law."

It is significant that a recent survey showed that in-laws are a big problem area of many marriages. This survey was conducted by a well-known marriage counselor.

From the husband's standpoint in-laws ranked fourth among all complaints. From the standpoint of the wife the in-laws ranked second as a grievance. In both cases it is obvious that many a couple needs help in solving a real problem.

So, the purpose of this article is to show how to solve and to avoid what is loosely called "in-law problems." Christian love is the most practical and efficient way of coping with the problem.

Certainly, the *informal* evidence of the present time denotes the widespread prevalence of "in-law problems." For example, we have the classic stereotype of the free-loading brother-in-law, the one who sponges off the husband. Also, there is the somewhat overbearing father-in-law, who insists that Mary's husband come to work for his business. Then there is Sam's mother. She is so possessive of her son that Eva, his wife, is driven to anger.

In popular culture the motherin-law often receives satirical treatment. One wonders if many couples do not consequently enter upon matrimony fully expecting to have "trouble" from their mothers-in-law. Often they are pictured as naggers, critics, whiners, and complainers.

For example, on a certain popular TV show recently, the mother of the husband came for one of her extended visits. She proceeded to find fault with her daughter-in-law's housekeeping, her cooking, and her general treatment of her husband. She was sort of a one-woman column in the little house that faced west.

In connection with the present article several of the more popular "confession" type of magazines were reviewed. It was believed that these magazines, which are supposed to deal with problems, might throw some light on the popular idea of in-laws. The review left this author with a rather depressed opinion of how some couples manage their in-law relationships.

It is not going too far to say that the informal evidence strongly suggests a lack of a positive program. The attitude toward the in-laws all too often is purely fatalistic. Trouble is just "naturally" expected. Needless to say, the expectation doesn't go unrewarded.

Another important point is the way the blame for problems is

shifted, transferred to the "inlaws," instead of being shared by the immediate principals involved —the man and wife. In effect, inlaws are unfairly made objects to blame. In some confession stories in-laws are actually made scapegoats.

All this popular evidence, deriving from many sources, suggests that we do need a fresh attitude toward ourselves and toward our relatives-by-marriage. In our positive program for getting along better with our in-laws, therefore, the first step will be to commence with ourselves. This not only is highly practical, good common sense, but it is eminently Christian. The following example suggests how a practical, Christian program will work.

Suppose John's mother-in-law is overly critical of him, or at least John thinks so. It makes no difference—if John thinks she is too critical, that results in difficulties. John complains that he is fed up with her nagging. She makes wise-cracks about his job, etc. Should John reply in kind?

John restrains himself the best he can, although there are times when he feels he is going to explode. Then his mother-in-law returns to her home. Immediately, John lashes out at his wife, Mary. The issue goes 'round and 'round, and ends with Mary's weeping bitterly.

If John remembers, however, that Jesus Christ taught that the greatest commandment is love, his heart will be much kinder toward his mother-in-law; she may be a difficult person, incidentally. He will have the confidence, the calmness, the self-discipline to get along with her. Moreover, through the practice of Christian love he will achieve what he so badly needs: an acceptance of his wife's mother, and a respect for her. Out of this will come tolerance for her ways of expressing things.

Exactly the same program extends to John's wife Mary in her relationship with her in-laws. In fact, some of John's difficulties may stem in part from his feeling that all is not "right" between Mary and his mother. Often this is true. Even this, however, is not the only reason why Mary should match John's Christian attitudes. She must realize the importance of his family without herself feeling insecure.

At the same time Christian love between man and woman causes each of them to do certain positive things for their marriage. The English philosopher, C. S. Lewis, speaks of this as "the foreign policy of the marriage."

For example, while Christian love inspires us to be positive, it also checks us, and exerts a necessary control. As important as it is to show love towards our inlaws, it is also necessary to have well-established policies towards them. Out of our respect for our marriage mate, we have a sort of "foreign policy."

Consequently, in such matters as finances, our respect makes us careful in not revealing too much of the intimate financial framework of the home to our own people. We maintain, in other words, a certain sanctity of the home, so necessary for it to be intimate, and "ours." This does not mean never to tell our parents things, but it does mean some discretion.

What would a good "foreign policy" in a marriage consist of?

First, there would be an emphasis upon constructive attitudes in all relationships.

Second, there would be value placed upon the husband and wife.

Third, there would be an indication to our families of just how important the marriage is to us.

The first two points are readily apparent; but the third point may require some discussion at this time.

A truly happy marriage is highly contagious. A happy marriage makes others happy. By happiness is meant a calm poise and serenity. It would be a rare parent who would not be impressed if his child were happy in marriage. For, of course, parents live for the happiness of their children.

An occasional word to the parents about one's happiness seems to be a good way of reassuring them that "everything is all right." It should be realized that to many a parent, the marriage of a child is almost like a shock; it can even be a fairly severe emotional experience. If the child, after marriage, continues to be thoughtful and kind, and at the same time demonstrates the merit of the marriage, this shock soon passes.

In particular all of us, in-laws

included, should examine our prejudices and our preconceptions. It may be that we have been conditioned to expect difficulties—as a natural result of popular culture of the day.

In general all of us should manifest the highest type of Christian love in our relationships. Through study, prayer, and practice we should try to discover just how practical Christian love is as a principle in our human relationships.

This article, as pointed out, has been concerned primarily for the party "of the first part," for it must be evident that any positive program must start with the marriage partners. The question of getting along with our in-laws isn't one of merely meeting them halfway. There are no slide rules in human relations, and we need no such static and misleading standards. It is our own efforts that count; we should be concerned for these efforts.

Many couples are reporting happy experiences with their "acquired families." These couples tell of fine fellowship. As Jim said, "One of the best results of my marriage is that through it I acquired some fine friends that I would not otherwise have had."

In-laws are people, just like anyone else. Most of them aren't looking for reasons to criticize and complain.



Archangel with a Grease Spot

(Continued from page 3)

THEN SUDDENLY, I felt the gentle magic of Christmas. A magic that comes every year with the singing of Christmas carols, the fragrant, spicy odor of pine trees, the reading of Christmas stories, and the giving of gifts to loved ones. I felt at ease, and even found myself humming the Christmas carols that were filling the air throughout the pageant. The Christmas Story, so old and yet new again with each Christmastide, made me forget about dusty gray choir robes and hair that obstinately refused to untangle. A soft light flooded the stage and rendered mellowness to all of the commonplace scenery and to the actors on the stage. I glanced at the choir robe. The light even improved its appearance somewhat, and the grease spot didn't look so foreboding any more.

The music of "Silent Night" brought the pageant to a close. After the curtain was shut, I climbed off my stentorian pedestal. I went into the dressing room behind the stage and slowly took off the choir robe. Carefully, I folded it and put it in a box. Maybe another archangel would wear it sometime . . .

Forty-Cent Gifts for Friends Who Have Everything

(Continued from page 9)

Foundation Sweet Dough

- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup lukewarm water
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 cakes yeast
- 3 eggs
- 6 tablespoons butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 7 cups flour

Dissolve yeast and 1 tablespoon sugar and salt in lukewarm water. Add milk. Beat thoroughly with electric beater or rotary hand beater. Add eggs, melted butter, and ½ cup sugar. Mix thoroughly. Add remaining flour. Knead lightly and place in greased bowl. Cover and set in warm place free from draft. Let rise until doubled in bulk, about two hours. When light, punch down, then roll out on a floured board, and shape the roll for the occasion.

This dough may be put, well covered, into the refrigerator and kept for several days. When chilled dough is taken from the refrigerator, additional rising time must be allowed.

This recipe will yield four Christmas wreath coffee cakes, four Christmas tree coffee cakes, four dozen cinnamon rolls, or four dozen orange bow knot rolls.

It has been a continuing pleasure to share copies of this recipe with friends

who have requested it. The uninitiated are shocked to find, in print, any serious suggestion that in a home kitchen today, part of the cooking process is simply waiting out the "let rise... about two hours" direction. I feel that my easy acceptance of this direction accounts for the difference some of my disappointed friends find in the results we get from the same recipe.

When I have guests for coffee, and over their third roll, they regretfully confide that they have never had time to try making yeast rolls, I silently remind myself that it was a long time before I admitted that in the allotment of time, there is basic equality. Choice of its use is different.

I would not suggest that for everyone the time required to bake products, available commercially in fine quality and variety, is time satisfactorily spent. It just happens to be heartwarming to me to feel that, with careful use of simple materials, I can make a gift that cannot be easily purchased.

A Christmas Surprise for Eric

(Continued from page 21)

toward Herr Larsen's cabin—what could it be?—a reddish glow in the sky! "'It's the Aurora Borealis," he thought.

But then he noticed a ribbon of smoke curling into the sky. Whirling round, he zoomed back down the hill.

"Herr Larsen! Herr Larsen!" he called. For flames were shooting up from the woodshed that joined the rear of the cabin. But the old man did not answer.

Eric burst into the room. He smelled

BIBLEGRAM SOLUTION

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matt. 11:28-29).

The Words

N Know

B Alley	O Fortune
C Miaou	P Thorny
D Heaven	Q Surly
E Melody	R Daily
F Usual	S Ironer
G Polly	T Mailed
H Wicked	U Roar
I Frowned	V Diadem
J Figure	W Melon
K Whole	X Talent
L Front	Y Salty
M Banana	Z Moos

A Voyage

woodsmoke. It stung his eyes. He could hear a groan. Holding his cap over his nose, he groped his way half blinded till his hands found someone lying on the floor. Eric tore off his coat to cover his friend's face. Then he dragged him out into the air, and rubbed Herr Larsen's forehead with snow. At last the old man opened his eyes.

"I must have tripped when I was out in the shed getting wood," he coughed. He had fallen and struck his head against something, then dropped the lighted candle into the kindling.

"My violin! My precious violin!" he cried.

Eric darted back into the cabin. Though he couldn't see for the smoke, he felt along the table till his fingers touched the violin case. Seizing it, he dashed out again and placed it in Herr Larsen's trembling hands.

Then Eric climbed to the roof of the cabin, grabbed the overhanging branch of the fir tree, and shook the snow from it down on the burning roof. Again and again he shook down more snow.

Herr Larsen, meanwhile, hurried to throw water from his water barrel into the blaze.

At last the fire was out. Eric took Herr Larsen's arm. "Come home with me," he urged. "You must stay with us till your cabin is repaired,"

The next evening was the night before Christmas. Eric's aunts, uncles and cousins, and his friends all were gathered in the great living room for the Christmas Eve celebrations, but Herr Larsen was given the seat of honor by the fireplace, where the Jul-log burned cheerfully. The gaily decorated Christmas tree rose in one corner of the room, while at the other end the long table groaned beneath the Christmas feast.

After dinner, the gifts were exchanged. Eric pushed his music cabinet from behind the tree to Herr Larsen.

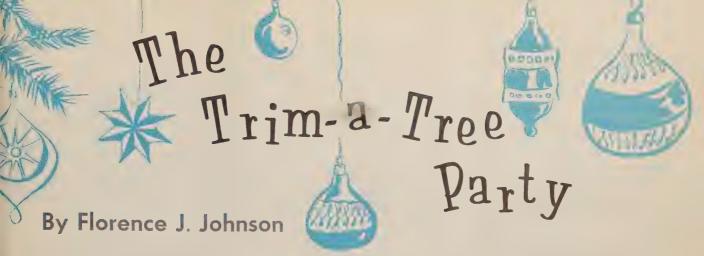
"My! My! What a fine cabinet!" the old man exclaimed. "And best of all, you made it for me yourself. Now we can keep our music where we can find it."

Then he stood up. "Eric and I have a little surprise for you," he announced.

His voice turned husky, and he lifted his violin from a nearby table. "Eric," he said, "but for you quick thinking my violin might have been burned to ashes, and I, myself, might not have been here with you and these friends. This is my Christmas gift to you, dear boy."

Eric was so overcome that he could only murmur, "Thanks, thank you so much!"

Then he took the bow in his hand and began playing "Silent Night." As the lovely notes floated from the mellow instrument, the boy saw happy surprise on his mother's face, and he thought, "The best part of Christmas is giving happiness to those we love."



I closed the door after the last departing guest. The annual trim-a-tree party was over.

"I think so every year, but this year, I'm sure this is the prettiest tree." Twelve-year-old Susan twisted a silver rope around a branch to bring a bright purple ball to a position that suited her better.

"Not bad," admitted her brother, folding the step-

ladder.

The house was fragrant with the scent of pine from the tree and the bayberry candles burning on the mantel.

The juvenile trim-a-tree party was a two-year-old institution. The preceding year Susan had complained that she *never* got a chance to hang the balls where she liked to see them. And who wants all blue balls? (I had done that one year. I probably will never live it down.)

"Next year," I had promised rashly, "you shall trim the tree."

Not being a child psychologist, I didn't know just how rash that promise was. I thought that Susan and Ted would trim the tree, while I made suggestions. Instead, ten other boys and girls, "our very special friends," Susan explained, arrived to lend a hand in trimming the tree.

"This is fun," Thelma White remarked that first year. "Mother and Dad always trim our tree after we're in bed. Susan, when I saw this beautiful red ball at Jackson's, I thought of your tree. Don't you think it would look lovely beside that gold ball?"

The first trim-a-tree party was a success. The finished product may not have been artistic to adult eyes, but it was bright and colorful.

Last year the youngsters showed more restraint. We were proud of our beautifully decorated tree.

This year I came back to the living-room door and surveyed the big pine topped with the gold star and the angel. It was a beautiful tree!

Ted had made and painted the star. He had searched the town until he had found the soft luminous gold he wanted. The angel was Susan's first Christmas gift. This year, in gold-trimmed white robes, the angel stood in her usual place—at the tree top, in front of the big gold star.

We add new ornaments each year, some merely to replace others that have been broken. Some are additions for our collections. Some are gifts. It's a rule, though—new ornaments, yes. Expensive ones, no. Different ones, yes, indeed.

This year Thelma had brought a sequin-studded snowman. From the Dennison twins there was one bright blue ball with their names and the year in silver. (A Dennison "Do-It-Yourself" job.) The Browns had brought two white stars glittering with mica. Lucy brought a ball in her favorite pink. I noticed that Susan had placed it near a ball of soft blue. The Baxters' contribution was clear cornucopias filled with beads of assorted sizes and colors. They were really an attractive addition to the tree.

How much of a party is this trim-a-tree event?

It starts early in the afternoon, with the tree already up and the lights in place, with boxes of ornaments standing open. We check beforehand. . . . What do we need? New bulbs? Some balls? Icicles? Silver rain?

We bring out big bowls and jardinieres—clear ones, of course. This year two massive apothecary jars filled with bright balls stand on the mantel.

Each year we add to the village under the Christmas tree. This year we added a group of carol singers. Setting up the village and arranging the figures is part of the trim-a-tree event.

Of course, no party is a party without eats. We have popcorn and fudge, hard candies and cookies to nibble on while the tree is being trimmed. When the tree is declared finished, the laborers adjourn to the dining room for the party food. This year the sandwiches were cut into fancy shapes—snowmen wearing bright green belts and red hats (green and red pepper snippets), hot chocolate with whipped cream sprinkled with red and green crushed candy, ice cream in blocks (vanilla ice cream with a green tree in the center), and assorted cookies of different designs—trees and wreaths, bells and Santa Clauses.

Susan and Ted made the nut cups, which were red and white cardboard chimneys with Santa going down. Lift Santa, and there were the nuts and mints. On each chimney the name of the guest was printed.

In the center of the table in a big bowl were the take-home-for-your-own-Christmas-tree balls. This year we chose big clear balls that could be opened. In the bottom of each was a rim of red and white cardboard like a chimney. Santa was just sliding down, and in his pack was cologne for the girls and

(Continued on page 30)

• An Evening in a Japanese Christian Home

(Continued from page 5)

room. This was very unusual, as the women of the house usually begin immediately to wash the dishes and seldom are seen again, especially the mother, until the guests leave.

Usually, entertainment in a Japanese home is rather formal, but here we were treated very much as old friends of the family. The fun began by Mr. Sato's announcing that the "Sato chorus" would sing for us. The whole family was commanded to get ready for the performance. At first the younger boys were hesitant; but they soon entered into the spirit, and the chorus of eight was ready to perform. They sang several hymns as a group. We then had duets, quartets, trios, and solos, all sung with the utmost enjoyment.

The normal Japanese woman will take little if any part in any such thing, always staying in the background; but Mrs. Sato sang with her family, and even sang a solo. All of the entertainment was interspersed with conversation. We were told how Mr. and Mrs. Sato had meet and married, with the help of a "go-between"; but marriage had been their own idea. Contrary to the accepted custom of the day, Mrs. Sato's father did not select a mate for her.

Akiko, the second sister, studies ballet, and we had been trying to persuade her to dance for us. She finally consented, and the room was cleared out rapidly for her performance. She did it with complete unselfconsciousness as though she were giving a ballet recital in our school auditorium!

It was nearing time for us to leave

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when suddenly Jiro had a thought. He had been to an international work camp the summer before and had copies of folk songs from all nations. So as a grand finale for the evening we sang several camp songs in English, Japanese, German, and French.

Then, all too soon it seemed, it was time for us to leave. We had asked the taxi to return for us at a certain time, as there was no telephone near by to call one. That time had come. So we got into our shoes, bowed to everyone, thanked them many times for the pleasant evening, and left. Masako gave us some tangerines and a small gift of miniature Japanese wooden shoes. Then the whole family took us back down the mud-and-water-filled road and across the little footbridge to our waiting taxi. We waved good-by to our Christian friends and started back to our own home, much enriched by the experiences of the evening.

• The Trim-a-Tree Party

(Continued from page 29)

pocket knives for the boys. Last year we fastened red and green balls to small packages, each containing one handkerchief.

The trim-a-tree party has proved to be very popular, and many of our friends and neighbors have taken up the idea, and are letting the children trim the tree.

But-let's face it-

Parents are human, too, and we enjoy trimming the Christmas tree. We looked around, and Hurrah! We found a childless couple, and—

Well, they have an annual trim-a-tree party now, with only adults invited!

Last year just after Christmas I saw a beautiful blue and silver ball at Jacksons. It will be our gift this year to the Allison tree.

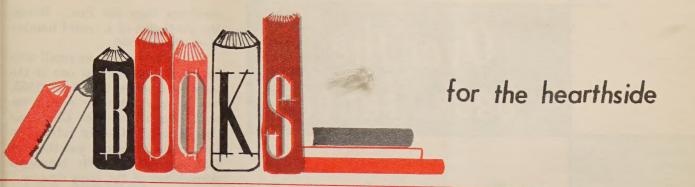


Our Lord Lies There Ring out, ring out, oh, Christmas bells Till music fills the very air, For in the sky a great Star lights A stable and our Lord is there.

The little Jesus, warm in sleep, Is bedded down on fragrant hay And kneeling close beside his bed The simple shepherds bend to pray.

Ring out, ring out, oh, Christmas bells
Till everyone hears once again
How Jesus came, a little child,
To be the Savior of all men.

-Helen Howland Prommel



For Children

Young children have a natural curiosity and wonder concerning the world about them. They voice this curiosity and wonder in questions which sometimes baffle the adults in their world. God Cares for Me, by Carolyn Muller Wolcott (Abingdon Press, unpaged, \$1.00) answers some of the more common questions in ways that satisfy children.

The lovely illustrations by Lloyd Dottered help to give a child security, as well as awareness of God's plan for his world.

For Youth

Sod House Adventure, by Bonnie Bess Worline (Longmans, Green and Co., 147 pages. Price, \$2.75.)

This is a story of pioneers in early Kansas. Phoebe and Hartley Dawson live with their parents and younger brothers and sisters in a sod house on a Kansas prairie. When the story opens, Mr. Dawson is away from home buying supplies, and a girl from a distant farm comes to the Dawson home, asking Mrs. Dawson to help with her mother, who is ill and expecting a baby. Mrs. Dawson feels that she must help the girl's mother, and she leaves Phoebe and Hartley in charge of the home.

During the few days that their parents are gone Phoebe and Hartley gain much appreciation for the tasks that their parents do every day. One night an Indian woman and her sick baby come to the house. Phoebe and Hartley

take care of the woman and nurse the baby back to health.

Quite a while later, after a new wooden house has been erected and the family are no longer living in the sod house, the Indians repay Phoebe and Hartley for their kindness.

Fascinating reading for young people from 12 to 15 years of age.

Is This My Love? by Gertrude E. Finney (Longmans, Green and Co., 228 pages. Price, \$3.00.)

This story has an historical setting. It is about the young women sent by the London company to Jamestown to become brides of the lonely male settlers there

Beatrice Whiteliff and her best friend Jennifer Abbot are two of the girls journeying from England to the new world. Beatrice goes mostly to avoid marrying a crochety elderly man in England, and Jennifer goes to escape a humdrum life as a secretary. Also, Beatrice's brother is in Jamestown.

Most of the girls find husbands the day the boat arrives in Jamestown, but Jennifer and Beatrice want to take their time with this important decision. Beatrice finds the men to be crude and uncouth, unlike the polished gentleman she knew in England. Then, Jennifer makes her choice. Beatrice, however, has three prospects, and she is indecisive. Finally, though, she does make her

Besides being interesting reading for teen-agers, this book is chock full of historical data.

Here is the story of one young man who took Greeley's advice and went west. Young Bill Fargo, by Neta Lohnes Frazier (Longmans, Green and Co., 1956. 200 pages, \$2.75), is also the story of the young West with its hardships, its unknowns, its wonders, and its rewards. Here are wagon trains, Indians, lost boys, some degree of girl-boy interest, dangers faced and conquered, and much more of the excitement and thrill of pioneer days. Young Bill is a fine, upstanding young fellow, and your young people will enjoy knowing him. The

author has written much about the West, where she is fully at home.

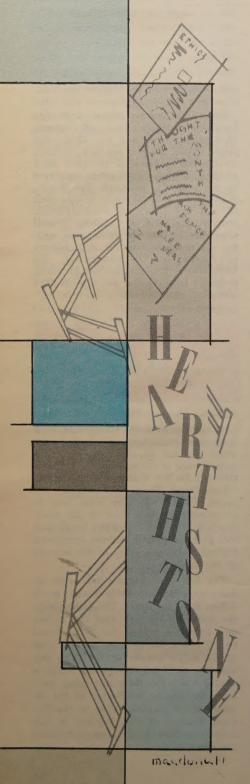
Oregon is also the locale of Merritt Parmelee Allen's East of Astoria (Longmans, Green and Co., 1956. 250 pages, \$3.00). Much of the book, however, reverses the process as the hero leads a band of men, fur-traders employed by the Astor Co., eastward. Rob Stuart, young as he is, is the leader of this band of men and shows his resourcefulness, bravery, and skill at handling difficult situations. Allen, the author, has written many novels with the early history of America as the background. He knows the way to the interest of young Illustrations are by Millard McGee.

For Adults

To call the Bible the "most sold, least read, most misunderstood" book in the world may not be completely true, but there's truth in the statement. J. Carter Swaim's Do You Understand the Bible? (Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 173 pages, \$2.50) will give some help in overcoming the last third of the situation just described. This is a book which will give the person without specialized biblical training a grasp of the message of the Bible.

The first five chapters deal with the many ways in which Bible thought world differs from our own. The author helps the reader to see also what the Protestant attitudes toward the Bible should be. The last five chapters present some of the major themes of the Bible and how they unfolded through the centuries during which the Bible was being written. Dr. Swaim is director of the department of English Bible of the National Council of Churches and is eminently qualified to help us understand our Bible.

Over the back fence



Christmas at Your House

What will Christmas be like at your house this year? Will it be only a time of frantic hurry and harassed frenzy? Will its atmosphere be marked more by the spirit indicated in the question, "What did you get for Christmas?" Will the "right jolly old elf" be the person who receives the greatest emphasis in the thinking, planning, and doing of your family circle?

The Christian family must never forget that the only valid reason for observing Christmas is that it is the accepted date for the birth of our Lord. It is pointless to point out, as some fanatics do, that we do not know the exact date of Jesus' birth. Perhaps it was July or some other month. The fact remains that for centuries Christians have associated that significant event with this season of the year. No other date has ever seriously been entertained by very many Christians.

So Christmas in the Christian home must more definitely and positively reflect the spirit of and our devotion to "him whom we adore." This issue of *Hearthstone* has tried to give some help to you in making Christmas at your house more Christian.

We Hope This Prophecy Fails

In July, shortly before this was written, it was prophesied that over 40,000 children, women, and men would die in traffic accidents by December 31. This prediction was made on the basis of mounting rate of fatalities that had occurred in the first six months of the year. In the past the last half of the year has always been worse for traffic

accidents than the first. Hence, the prediction of a record number of deaths in 1956.

As this is written, we recall with horror and shame that one of the ways we observed Christmas, 1955, was by establishing a record for traffic deaths over the Christmas "week end." Closely related to this tragic "record" was the fact that sales of alcoholic beverages skyrocketed at the same time.

Here are four rules to observe this Christmas in order to prevent a repetition of last year's carnage.

First—Drive safely and courteously yourself. Watch traffic and pedestrians carefully. Observe speed limits and warning signs.

Second—Urge strict enforcement of traffic laws. In just three months, one state reduced traffic deaths 14 per cent, while national rates rose 11 per cent! It was done by automatically suspending licenses—by literally taking offenders off the road.

Third—Ask for extra policing where needed . . . for better roads, street lighting, and signs . . . for safety training in your schools.

Fourth—Urge your own local safety council to work with state and national groups for uniform traffic laws and enforcement.

Let's help make that prophecy fail!

Whom Has God Joined?

The problem of divorce has too long been looked at by the churches merely in the light of the last part of the text: "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder." Debates still rage in various ecclesiastical circles over the relationship of divorced persons to the church. Recently, a church body reversed its long-standing rule that divorced persons who had married again could become members of their denomination.

Whom has God joined? Is every marriage under every circumstance God-ordained? Can we claim that every marriage performed by an ordained minister is such?

Here is a point at which much study should be given. A study conference in the area of marriage is sorely needed by the churches.

Poetry Page

The Mother

Mary's face was lighted, Mary's soft lips smiled, Mary's heart was happy For she held the Child.

Little did she notice
Incense, gold, and myrrh,
Heaven's choicest treasure
Cuddled close to her.

- Helen Kingsbury Wallace



"Supposing I cleaned out the garage and the basement? Would it look like I was hinting for a chemistry set for Christmas?"

A Christmas Prayer

Christmas comes again to men
Enwrapped in sorrow, hatred, fear.
But Christmas comes to pierce with light
This earthly darkness once a year.

Lord, grant to us this twofold prayer
That Christmas may not be in vain:
Shed forth such light in Christian hearts
That it may heal this grief and pain.

And somehow teach us round the world

To keep this love and hope aflame

For every day in all the year

That peace may come in his dear name.

- Mildred Long

Birthday Gift

Lord, thou hast set a million stars aglow,
Bright candles on a chocolate-frosted sky,
Hath spread upon a tablecloth of snow
A feast of beauty for each passer-by;
And we who serve thee, gather roundabout
Thy table, under heaven's candlelight.
Before the dawn blows every candle out,
Accept our gift of love, this Christmas night.

- Helen Giorgi

A victim of shopping fatique...

Don't let this happen to you during this busy Christmas season. Christmas is a time to enjoy life, to spend happy, memorable hours with family and friends. But all too often the real spirit and meaning of Christmas is lost in the flurry and bustle of preparations. Christmas is not a time to wear yourself out with cooking, cleaning, decorating, and, above all, gift shopping. Every year we hear more about the commercialization of Christmas and the amount spent on gifts rises to a new high while the significance of the gift is lost. This year give a truly meaningful gift that will be treasured throughout the year. Give a subscription to Hearthstone to your best and closest friends. What better way to wish them joy and happiness for the coming year.





Hearthstone contains something for every member of the family. There are suggestions for family fun, recreation and guidance; human interest articles with a Christian viewpoint; fiction for young people and adults; delightful stories for children; aids to family worship; study articles and guides; party plans, recipes, things to make, Biblegrams, etc. Hearthstone should be the most "dogeared" magazine in the home every month. And, your friends will appreciate your thoughtfulness in providing them with 32 pages of clean, wholesome reading each month. This is a magazine they won't have to hide from the children. In fact, even the tiniest child enjoys looking through Hearthstone because of its many pictures and attractive use of color. So make your Christmas shopping easier and give your friends a really valuable gift. A year's gift subscription to Hearthstone is only \$2.50. A gift card with your name will be sent upon request.

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